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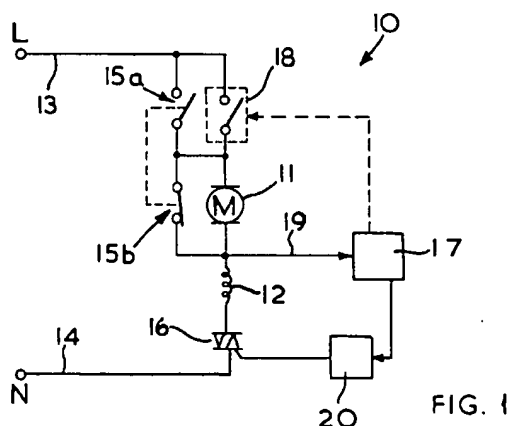
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Controlled braking device for electric motors and in particular portable tools.

A method of braking a universal electric motor comprising a field winding (12, 112, 212) and an armature (11, 111, 211) comprises the steps of short-circuiting the armature (11, 111, 211), powering for a braking period the field winding (12, 112, 212) with at least a predetermined braking voltage, completely cutting off power from the motor after the end of the predetermined braking period.

An electric motor (10, 110, 210) comprises means (16, 116, 216) of powering the motor and means (18, 118, 215a) of controlled cut-off of the power supply. Upon operation of means of short-circuiting of the motor armature the power supplies means supply the field windings (12, 112, 212) with at least one predetermined braking voltage. Upon exhaustion of a braking period, the cut-off means operates to cut off power completely from the motor.



This invention relates to electric motors, and particularly to series wound universal motors, and to tools incorporating such motors. In the known art of electric motors the problem of furnishing adequate braking of the motor upon its turning off is known. Continuing rotation by inertia is in fact a source of risk in various situations. In particular, it is desirable that portable electric tools, such as for example circular saws, grinders, etc., can be braked in a short time to allow the user to lay them down without excessive care soon after switching-off. In tools having universal motors supplied with alternating current, a braking system very widely used because of its economy is that of connecting in parallel the armature and field winding upon turning-off the tool. In this manner the counterelectromotive force generated produces a braking action on the rotor. Said system can however fail if the tool is turned off opposite a zero position of the supply current sinusoid. In this case the residual magnetic flux in the windings is nil and hence no braking force is generated. To obviate this shortcoming, various circuits have been proposed. For example, on switching-off, it has been proposed to power the motor with a direct current voltage for a brief fraction of time immediately before connection in parallel of the armature and field windings. This ensures the existence of residual flux in the next parallel-connection phase. A circuit providing this feature is in DE-A-3820629.

Even after this elimination of the possibility of brake failure, there is another problem with both the braking techniques described above, and this is that the braking action can initially be very sharp, but then it decreases with the slowing of motor rotation. Thus the mechanical parts of the motor and, indeed, the tool in which it is fitted, are greatly stressed at the beginning of the braking process and this results in the possibility of mechanical failures. In addition, with manual tools the 'jerk' of the sudden braking can cause the tool to escape from the user's hand if not firmly gripped.

The general object of the present invention is to obviate the above mentioned shortcomings, or at least to mitigate their effects, by supplying a safe braking device for electric motors of the universal type, in particular for manual tools, which, while being economical, nevertheless ensures adequate braking upon switching-off the motor without initial 'jerks' and with a predetermined deceleration curve.

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided an electric motor comprising an armature, rotor coils on said armature, a stator, field coils on said stator, means to interconnect said rotor and field coils, switch means which has three positions; in a first of which said rotor and field coils are connected to a supply voltage; in a second of which said rotor coils are short circuited and a proportion of said supply voltage is connected to said field coils and in a

third of which said supply voltage is disconnected from said field and rotor coils, and brake control means to control operation of said switch means from said second to third positions.

Preferably said proportions is between one tenth and one half of the supply voltage. Preferably voltage control means controls the voltage across said field coils and, in said first position of said switch means, a first voltage is applied to said field coils by said voltage control means, and in said second position of said switch means, a second smaller voltage is applied across said field coils by said voltage control means.

Preferably said voltage control means comprises a TRIAC in series with said field coils, under the control of a DIAC supplied by a first resistor/capacitor circuit having a second resistor in parallel with said first resistor wherein said second resistor is isolated from said bridge in second position of said switch means. Said brake control means may comprise delay means to provide a predetermined delay period, of duration sufficient to ensure adequate braking of the motor. Alternatively, said brake control means may comprise means to detect rotation of the rotor and relay means to hold said switch means in said second position while said rotor rotates above a predetermined speed.

Said delay means may comprise a compactor which, after a predetermined delay, detects said second voltage and deactivates said relay means so that said switch means moves to its third position. Said relay means may form an integral part of said switch means.

Thus the present invention not only ensures that a magnetic flux remains in the field windings during a braking period after switching-off the motor, but also provides for control of that magnetic flux in the most effective way to achieve optimum deceleration. What is more, much of the circuit employed for this purpose is already provided in many tools in the form of a motor speed control, which by a simple measure becomes a brake speed control. The invention provides for both a simple arrangement where the brake is simply applied for a predetermined delay period and a more sophisticated arrangement where motor speed controls the braking period. It is within the ambit if the present invention to provide more sophisticated arrangements providing variable braking characteristics.

To further clarify the explanation of the innovative principles of the present invention and its advantages as compared with the known art there are described below with the aid of the annexed drawings possible embodiments as nonlimiting examples applying said principles.

In the drawings:-

Figure 1 shows a first diagrammatic motor power supply circuit provided in accordance with the

present invention;

Figure 2 shows a circuit embodying some of the principles of the circuit of Figure 1;

Figure 3 shows an alternative motor power supply circuit provided in accordance with the present invention; and

Figure 4 shows diagrammatically a portable tool adapted to incorporate the circuit of the above figures.

With reference to the drawings, Figure 1 shows a circuit (10) of power supply for a universal type motor comprising an armature or rotor (11) and field windings (12) arranged in series with each other.

The motor is powered by an alternating current line (13,14) through a contact (15a) of a main switch (15) and through a TRIAC (16). The main switch (15) comprises a second contact (15b) in parallel with the rotor (11) and which closes when the contact (15a) opens.

With reference to Figure 4, the switch (15) is here operated by the trigger switch (315) controlling an angle grinder (300). The tool (300) has inside it a universal electric motor (311) comprising said windings (12) and armature (11). In this case opening of the contact (15a) coincides with release of the trigger switch (315) by the operator. Inside the tool (300) there is a card (310) for assembly of the electronic and electric parts of the circuit (10).

The TRIAC (16) is connected with its terminal or command port to a power supply control circuit (20), which comprises a known voltage control system. A detection means (17) controls both the circuit (20) and a relay (18), arranged in parallel with the contact (15a). The circuit (17) detects a warning signal upon release of the switch (15) through a line (19). The circuit (17) can for example be a microprocessor or wired logic system for control of the tool functions. The relay (18) and switch (15) comprise switch means for the circuit (10).

How this system may be constructed is substantially of the known art and therefore is not further illustrated nor described, it being readily imaginable to those skilled in the art, especially in the light of the following operation description.

In use, when the operator operates the switch (15), the contact (15a) closes and the contact (15b) opens. The motor is thus normally powered, the TRIAC (16) being controlled by the circuit (20) to be for example operated in phase with the power supply (13,14); so comprising a known speed control. Simultaneously the circuit (17) commands closing of the relay (18), although closing the relay at this moment is superfluous, it being in parallel with the contact (15a) already closed.

When the operator releases the switch (15) the contact (15a) opens and the contact (15b) short-circuits the armature (11). The relay (18) however maintains the power supply, which now arrives direct-

ly at the windings (12) by passing the armature (11). The voltage variation on the line (19) due to short-circuiting of the armature signals to the circuit (17) that the switch (15) has been released. The circuit (17) now controls through the circuit (20) and the TRIAC (16), powering of the windings (12) in accordance with any predetermined braking function. Said predetermined braking function can be merely a fixed voltage less than maximum operating voltage, or a time-variable voltage with predetermined behaviour, but always some proportion of the supply voltage. Thanks to the continuous powering of the windings (12) magnetic flow for operation of rotor braking is ensured. After a predetermined time period sufficient for complete braking, e.g. 2 seconds, the circuit (17) opens the relay (18), completely cutting off power to the tool.

It is obvious that the circuit (17) can be provided to power the windings with a variable voltage in accordance with any predetermined function so as to achieve desired deceleration and braking. The circuit (17) can of course merely reduce the power supply voltage of the motor to a fixed value, e.g. corresponding to one tenth of normal motor power supply, predetermined to avoid excessively sharp initial braking. Indeed, a diode and resistor could be incorporated in series with the relay (18) so that a direct current voltage powers the windings (12) during the braking period.

Figure 2 shows a second possible embodiment of a circuit indicated generally by reference number (110) putting into practice some of the feature described above with reference to Figure 1. A universal type motor comprises an armature or rotor (111) and field windings (112) arranged in series.

The motor is powered by an alternating current line (113, 114) through a contact (115a) of a main switch (115) and through a TRIAC (116). The mains switch (115), e.g. provided again in trigger form for the tool, comprises a second exchange contact (115b) which closes in short circuit the rotor (111) when the contact (115a) opens.

The TRIAC (116) is controlled by a control circuit (120) formed of a DIAC (121) connected to an RC network to provide a known phase-displacement voltage control system. The RC network comprises a condenser (124) and a first resistor (122). The exchange contact (115b), when in the position opposite the short-circuit position, connects a second resistor (123) to the RC network in parallel to first resistor (122).

A detection circuit (117) has an input (119) connected between the field winding (112) and the TRIAC (116). It has a control output for a relay (118) which is arranged parallel to the contact (115a). The circuit (117) further comprises a power supply section (125) supplying a comparator (126) in the form of an operational amplifier controlling through a transistor (127)

a coil (128) for closing the relay (118).

The comparator (126) has a reference input (+) connected to a reference generator comprising a resistive divider (129, 130). A comparison input (-) of the comparator (126) is connected to the input (119) of the circuit (117) through a rectifying diode (131) and an integration RC network (132).

During operation there is on the network condenser (132) (and hence at the comparison input (-) of the comparator (126)) a voltage inversely proportional to the average value of the positive half-wave of the motor power supply. This voltage is compared with the reference given by the divider (129, 130).

In use, upon operating the switch (115) the motor is normally powered through it through the TRIAC (116), controlled by the circuit (120). Here the voltage on the condenser (132) is low enough to be less than the reference voltage, and hence the comparator will hold the relay (128, 118) attracted and its contacts closed.

Releasing the switch (115), the contact (115b) short-circuits the rotor (111) and disconnects simultaneously the resistance (123) from the circuit (120). The contact (115b) thus reduces the motor power supply to a value established by the resistance (122), and which is predetermined to offer the optimal braking effect. The power supply of the circuit is ensured by the relay (118), which is still closed.

However, because the conduction periods of the TRIAC have diminished, by isolating resistor (123) the voltage on line (119) increases. The absolute point at which the threshold determined by the reference input (+) is reached depends on the time constant determined by the values of the RC network (132) and division of resistors (129, 130). When the input voltage (-) of the comparator becomes greater than the reference voltage (+), the comparator de-energizes the relay (128, 118) and finally completely removes circuit power supply.

Figure 3 shows an alternative circuit (210) for power supply and braking of an electric motor formed of an armature (211) and field windings (212). The series between the armature (211) and field windings (212) is powered by an electric line (213, 214) through a contact (215a) of a main switch (215) and through a TRIAC (216). The main switch (215), provided for example again in a tool trigger, comprises also a second exchange contact (215b) which closes when the contact (215a) is opened and short circuits the armature (211).

The TRIAC (216) is controlled by a control circuit (220) formed of a DIAC (221) connected to an RC Network to provide a known phase-displacement voltage control system as described with reference to Figure 2. The RC network comprises a condenser (224) and a first resistor (222) to which the exchange contact (215b), when in a position opposite that of armature short circuit, connects a second resistor (223).

The resistor (223) can advantageously be variable so as to enable control of the rotation speed of the motor during its normal operation.

The contact (215a) is a delayed contact, i.e. upon release of the switch (215) it opens with a predetermined delay equal to the requisite time for braking.

In use, by operating the switch (215) the contact (215a) closes instantaneously and the exchange contact (215b) moves from the position shown in the figure to connect the resistor (223) to the RC network of the control circuit (220). The motor then begins to turn at the speed preset by the condenser (224) and the parallel result of the resistors (222, 223).

Upon release of the switch (215) the contact (215b) returns instantaneously to the original position, short-circuiting the rotor (211) and disconnecting the resistor (223). The power supply is thus reduced to the value established by the resistor (222) alone. There is then a braking phase until delayed opening of the contact (215a).

At this point it is clear that the preset objects of supplying an economical power supply circuit allowing controlled braking without initial jerks of a universal electric motor have been achieved.

Naturally, the above description of embodiments applying the innovative principles of the present invention is given merely by way of example and therefore is not to be taken as a limitation of the scope of the invention.

For example, the switch means, in addition to relay contacts (18, 118), can be provided by electronic components, as for example by a TRIAC. In addition, the contact (15a, 115a), instead of powering the motor directly, can merely command the control circuit (17, 117) to close the relay (18, 118).

Claims

1. An electric motor (10) comprising an armature, rotor coils (11) on said armature, a stator, field coils (12) on said stator, means to interconnect said rotor and field coils, switch means (15, 18) to connect and disconnect said coils from a supply voltage characterised in that said switch means has three positions: in a first of which said rotor and field coils are connected to said supply voltage; in a second of which said rotor coils are short circuited (15b) and a proportion of said supply voltage is connected to said field coils; and in a third of which said supply voltage is disconnected from said field and rotor coils, and in that brake control means (17) are provided to control operation of said switch means from said second to third positions.
2. A motor as claimed in Claim 1, characterised in that said proportion is between one tenth and

one half of the supply voltage.

3. A motor as claimed in Claim 1 or 2, characterised in that said brake control means comprises delay means (19, 119) to provide a predetermined delay period, of duration sufficient to ensure adequate braking of the motor. 5

4. A motor as claimed in Claim 1 or 2, characterised in that said brake control means comprises means (19) to detect rotation of the rotor and relay means (18) to hold said switch means in said second position while said rotor rotates above a predetermined speed. 10
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5. A motor as claimed in Claim 3, characterised in that voltage control means (116, 120) controls the voltage across said field coils and, in said first position of said switch means, a first voltage is applied to said field coils by said voltage control means, and in said second position of said switch means, a second smaller voltage is applied to said field coils by said voltage control means. 20

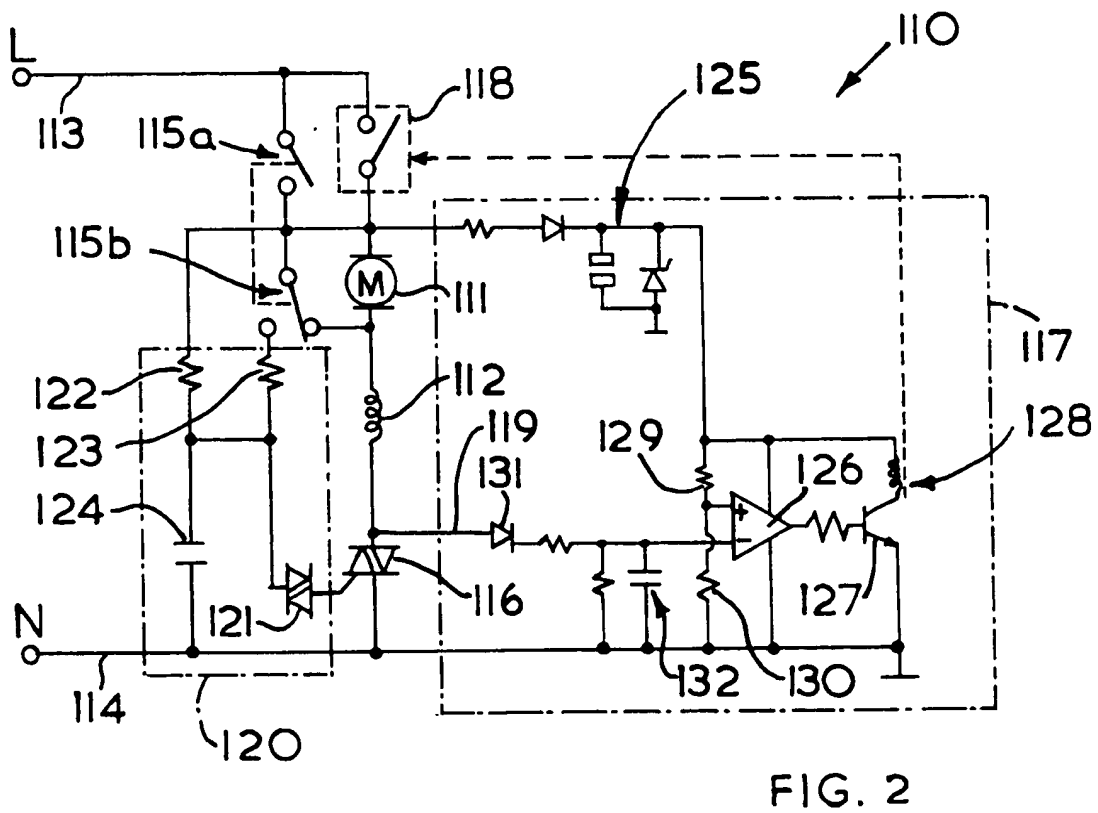
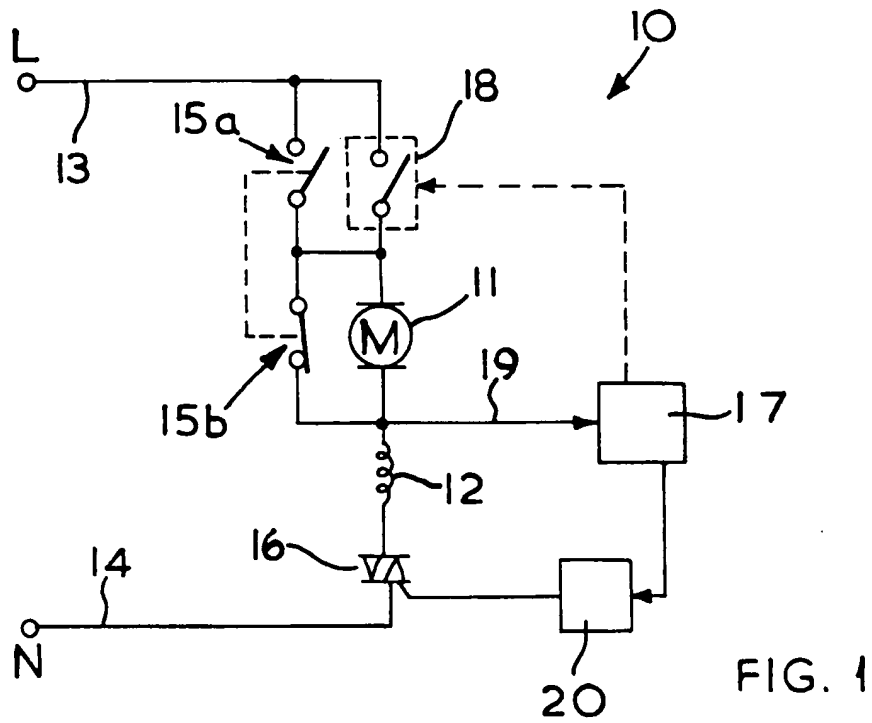
6. A motor as claimed in Claim 5, characterised in that said voltage control means comprises a TRIAC (116) in series with said field coils, under the control of a DIAC (121). 25

7. A motor as claimed in Claim 6, characterised in that said DIAC is supplied by a first resistor/capacitor circuit having a second resistor in parallel with said first resistor, and in that said second resistor is isolated from said circuit in said second position of said switch means. 30
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8. A motor as claimed in Claim 5, 6 or 7, characterised in that said delay means comprises a comparator (126) which, after a predetermined delay, detects said second voltage and deactivates said relay means so that said switch means moves to its third position. 40

9. A motor as claimed in Claim 8, characterised in that said relay means forms an integral part of said switch means. 45

10. A method of braking an electric motor, in which said motor comprises an armature having rotor coils, a stator having field coils and means to connect said coils with a voltage supply, said means including switch means, the method comprising the steps of:- 50
 - a) short circuiting said rotor coils, and
 - b) supplying a proportion of said voltage supply to said field coils. 55



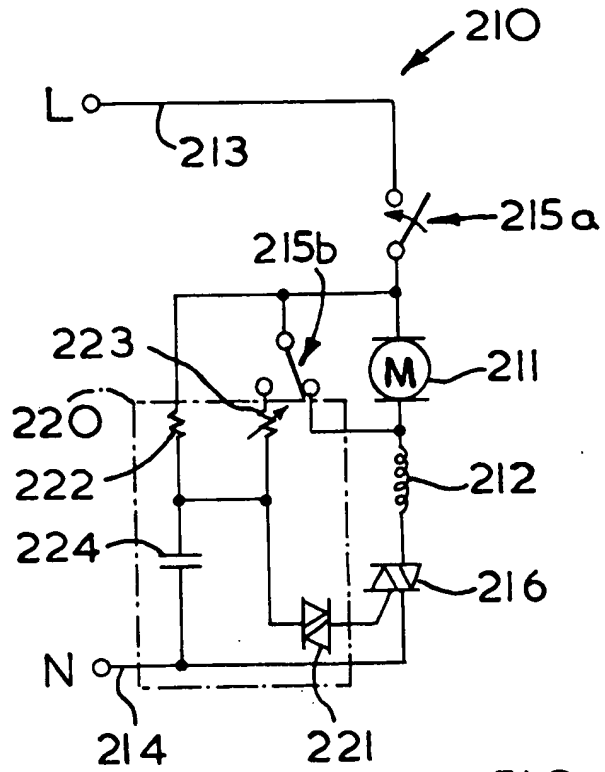


FIG. 3

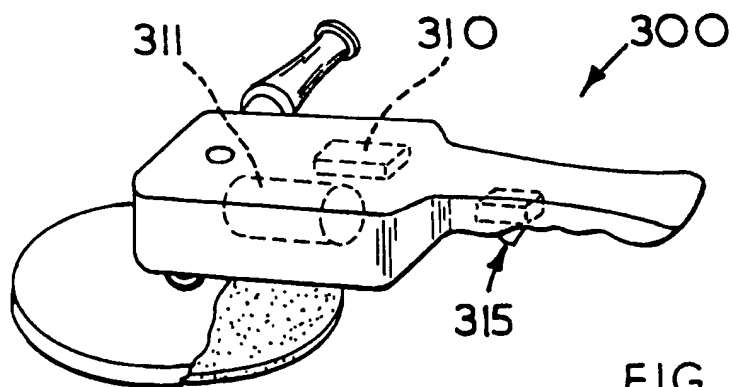


FIG. 4